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A  
CONTROVERSIAL LETTER,

OF A NEW KIND,

TO THE

REV. DR. PRICE, (R-)

FROM A

C L E R G Y M A N

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

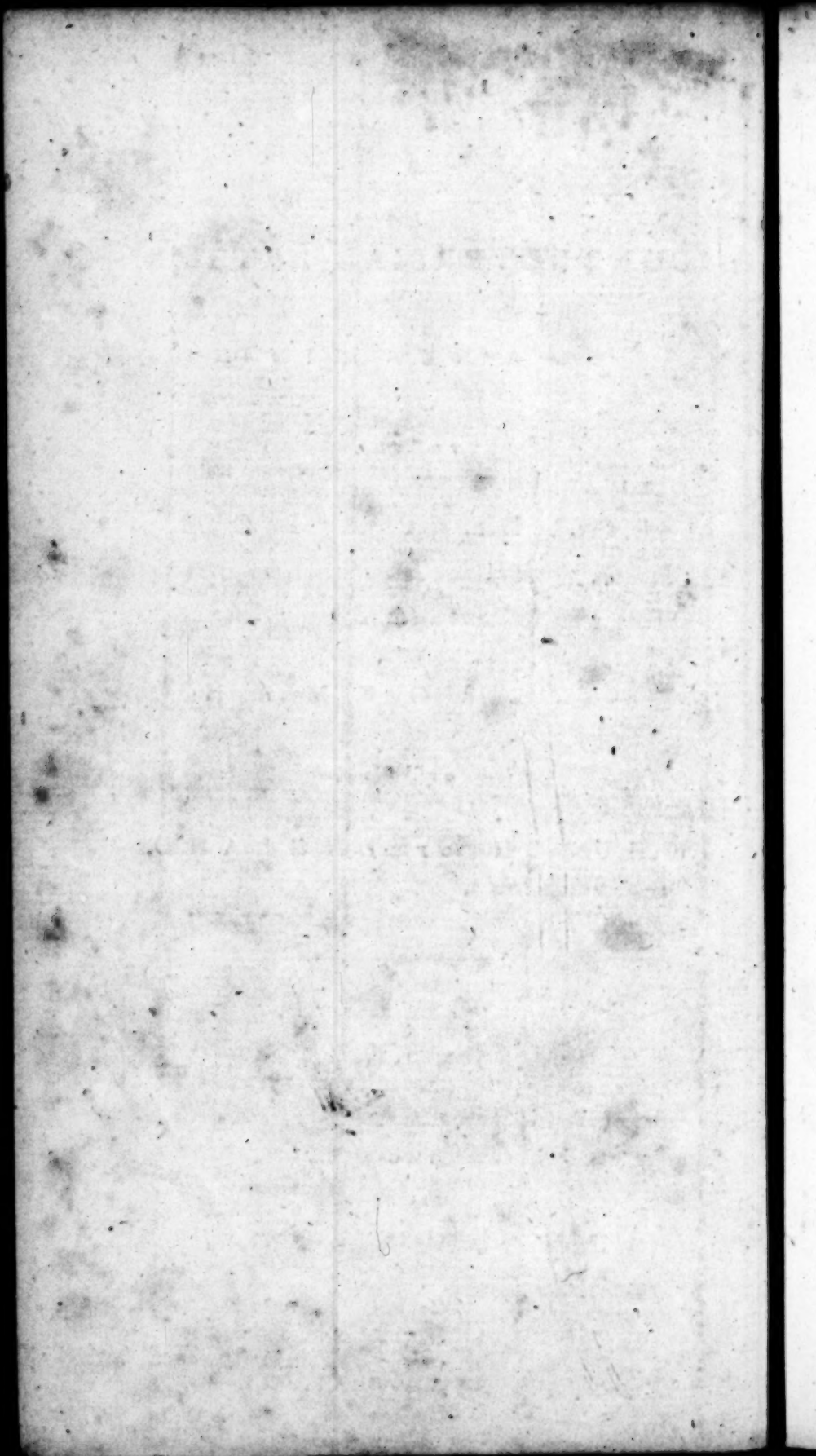
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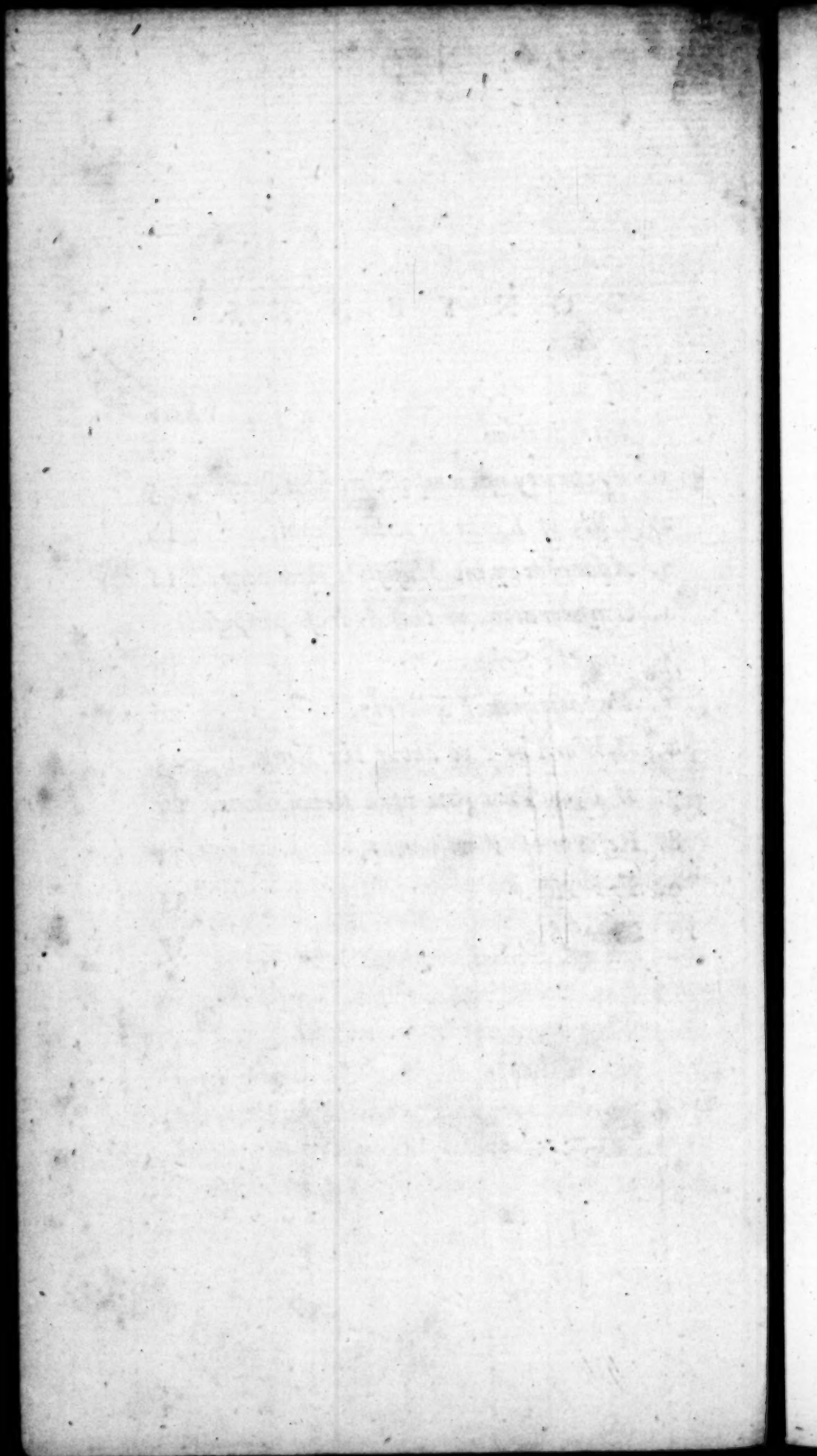
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A

CONTROVERSIAL LETTER, &c.

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DEAR SIR,

**P**UBLIC letters, it may be observed, as commonly give vent to the fermentations of enmity and malevolence, as private correspondence, to the feelings of friendship and affection. But, in commencing this, I am happy to be able to assure you, that it will contain no justification of the above remark : that you will find, if you vouchsafe it a perusal, nothing by which it can be distinguished from the private remonstrance of a friend, except the public nature of its topics; that you may

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read

read it without fear of insult; and that in conforming to the style of address usually prefixed to letters of civility, I have done no kind of violence to the secret dispositions of my heart.

Yet I will not pretend to deny that, on some subjects, and particularly on some of those discussed in your late *Revolution Sermon*, our feelings and opinions are very different: but your feelings are probably as involuntary as mine, and to your opinions you have at least as good a right. Should I therefore endeavour, in any instances, to convert you to my way of thinking, which perhaps in itself may savour of some vanity, there will be no occasion for us to fall into enmity: nor shall I ever attempt to gain my purpose by violence, or injurious language, but by sober expostulation and dispassionate argument; couched in such terms as I should choose to see employed in controversy against myself; such as any man may hear with complacency, and consider, rather as conveying an obligation than an injury. This I have ventured to call a new  
kind

kind of controversial writing, which if it be not literally, it is at least comparatively; being much less trite and hackneyed than the rough polemic style.

In consequence of these dispositions, I begin by supposing, that, notwithstanding the apparent violence of some of your doctrines, you are in truth a sincere Christian; obedient to the laws of God for conscience' sake, and not actuated by any desire so strongly as that which you profess to cherish, the zeal of a philanthropic mind for the general interests of humanity. I have read your volume of sermons, printed a few years ago; and in that, amidst opinions which I consider as erroneous, I think there may be discovered the traces of this excellent character. The profession of it certainly is there; and, for the sake of human nature, of which it is always painful to think very ill, I am inclined, in every possible instance, to have recourse to all expedients for reconciling apparent inconsistencies, rather than call in to their solution that odious and diabolical quality, hypocrisy. Personal know-

ledge of you I have not; nor any *data* on which to found a just opinion concerning you, except your published works, and public conduct. When therefore I perceive that your expressions are generally those of genuine candour, moderation, and benevolence, and yet object to some of your opinions for wanting, as I think, those very qualities, I can form a thousand suppositions to remove the difficulty, rather than consent to conclude concerning you, as I must were I to imagine those expressions insincere. I repeat it therefore, that I address you with pleasure, as a friend to mankind in general, and among them to me; who neither yet have forfeited, nor mean to render myself unworthy of that common title to your attachment. Nor can I feel a doubt that the topics of dissent which your late sermon will supply, may be discussed between us amicably; not only without destroying, but even in such a manner as to strengthen the tie of Christian amity connecting us, whether we should, on either hand, relinquish or retain our separate opinions,

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The matter of this letter, for distinctness sake, I shall divide into sections, prefixing to each a short title, pointing out the topic there considered.

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## § 1.

*Propriety of Composition in a Sermon.*

IN the first place, my good sir, I differ greatly from you in my notions of propriety, respecting the style and composition of a sermon. That this is the fact, I deduce, not from any precept expressly delivered by you, but from your practice in the sermon now under consideration. There are occasions, I will readily agree with you when such discourses must necessarily have more of a political tendency than in common cases would be proper, or even tolerable: and I will allow as frankly, that the time and circumstances of that you  
now



now have published, fully authorized you to consider such disquisitions not only as permitted, but, if you please, as unavoidable. Yet still my feelings tell me that a difference, marked and evident throughout, ought ever to exist, between a sermon and a common pamphlet on the subject of politics. Of that difference, besides a certain unaffected solemnity of manner and language, one characteristic ought, I think, in reason to be this; that in a pamphlet particular matters, persons, and events, may unequivocally be named, and openly approved or censured; but in a sermon, for the sake of preserving the dignity and delicacy of that species of address, general reasonings only ought to be presented; applied to any particular subjects in view, if at all, merely by such allusions as the audience may sufficiently comprehend, without placing the preacher in the light of a partizan in common politics, or in contentions merely temporal.

This caution, in my opinion, every clergyman ought to observe, not only through  
respect

respect to the place in which he is to speak, which ought not to be made subservient to matters of mere worldly import; but also for the sake of maintaining the proper elevation of his professional character. A preacher of the word of God, a teacher and enforcer of great and general truths, has an office entrusted to him, in its own nature, sublime and glorious. A contender for political dogmas, and a partizan in temporary questions, is comparatively contemptible; and the characters cannot in any degree be combined, without a proportionable degradation of the sacred ministry. General truths in politics have indeed a dignity from their high importance to society, which may well permit them to be delivered even from the place where the gospel is usually expounded: but the particular application of those truths is connected with private passions, and thereby sullied; it is not therefore for the preacher to point out, but for the auditors to discover; in whom, as you yourself in one instance suggest, there is never wanting a readiness, at least as prompt as could be wished, to make the same transition. Thus  
may

may every good design be fully effected (and you will agree with me that no other ought to be attempted), and yet the character of a minister of that gospel which intermeddles not with human contests, will be preserved untainted and inviolate.

Such is my opinion on this subject, which I have stated thus at large that it may be considered fairly, apart from the present application of it. Your ideas must have been very different; whether they are more correct I now submit to your consideration. Certain it is that the composition of your late discourse was governed by no such rules of delicacy or propriety. It is candid to suppose that the matter never had presented itself to your contemplation in this point of view, otherwise you would not have allowed yourself, in a sermon, to speak of the King, of his illness, of the addresses presented on his recovery, in open and express terms; giving your opinion on each particular point, rather as a politician than as a divine; much less would you have descended so completely to the style of a  
common

common political pamphlet, and that not of the highest class, as to insert even a sketch of such an address as you yourself would have presented.

These distinctions, if formed upon sound reasons, you doubtless will readily admit. If deduced only from feeling and refinement, you probably will allow them to be of importance, so far as the feelings of men may be supposed to influence their opinions concerning religion and its ministers. For my own part I conceive them to be such as in serious minds will arise almost inevitably; should you continue to think otherwise, no offence need yet be taken on either side. Let every man act according to the honest conviction of his own mind, and little of accusation will adhere to any. Your audiences perhaps may be best pleased in being so addressed; in which case you will in some measure be justified in continuing that species of exhortation. Mine, I know, would be disgusted at it; for which reason, among others, whatever may be my private zeal on any political question, it is necessary

cessary that I should for ever avoid a style which they would resent as indelicate, and for which I should blush as degrading.

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§. 2.

*Duty of Kings to their People.*

YOUR novel and spirited expression, that "the rebellion of *Kings against their people*, has been more common, and done "more mischief, than the rebellion of people against their Kings," I admire, and would willingly adopt, were I certain that it would not be employed by some designing persons, as you, I trust, did not intend it; to lessen the general aversion against the latter species of rebellion, by classing it with one not generally abhorred enough. I would adopt it fairly, to represent that transgression of regal duty by which a Sovereign becomes the oppressor instead of the protector  
of



of his people, as being pernicious, at least in an equal degree, with that turbulence of insurrection by which the people destroy their own security, and overturn the bulwarks that public prudence had erected. How accurate this statement may be, it is not now important to enquire; the expression is forcible and striking, and calculated, if not misemployed, to produce an excellent effect. So far we agree in sentiments, on what is most important; on the particular topics next brought forward by you, we differ very essentially.

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§. 3.

*Addresses on his Majesty's recovery.*

IN the addresses presented to the throne, on the recovery of him whose previous misfortune so many thousands of Britons had lamented most sincerely, you, Sir, imagine

you discover, not so much the feelings of "enlightened and manly citizens, rejoicing with a beloved sovereign," as the abject servility of an "herd, crawling at the feet of a master."—For my own part, though little disposed to crawl at the feet of any man, I declare I perceived nothing in such of the addresses as fell under my observation, but the transport of men, suddenly and almost miraculously rescued from a state of conflict and difficulty, and from the apprehension, at least, of great political evils. I saw in them only the same transport, (honest, manly, and worthy, as it seemed to me, of Englishmen,) which burst out in acclamations in our streets and theatres, and blazed in illuminations from one extremity to the other of the British empire. Without taking part with any political description of men, this is undeniably clear, that divided as opinions then were, and opposite as the measures appeared which were espoused by different sides, it must have been a cause of heart-felt joy to every honest citizen and subject, to see that tempest of contention suddenly subside; restoring, when least expected, those halcyon days  
of

of peace, security, and good government, the value of which they now had learned, to estimate from their loss. Disorder and political convulsion are desirable only to those whose scattered fortunes cannot be retrieved but by wreck of other property, whose sinking hopes can never be buoyed up, but by a storm; to prudent and well-minded citizens they are always dreadful and detestable.

But you think, Sir, that the language of the addresses was servile. I cannot undertake to defend the whole mass of addresses then delivered, the greater part of which I never saw; nor do I think it improbable, that from the sudden fervour of zeal by which they were dictated, some among them might contain more courtly expressions than a very rigid ear would listen to with perfect patience: but yet I must do justice to my countrymen; depraved and degenerate as you appear to think them, I trust there lives not at this hour a Briton, who would not both express and feel disdain, at hearing imputed to him the abject propensity *to crawling at the feet of a master*. My inmost  
blood

blood ferments, I confess, at the very sound of those odious words; which, if I could think them applicable, would make me despise the collective body of my fellow-citizens, and look up to you, by whom their baseness had been so nobly stigmatized, for the plan and execution of a reform.

But, indeed, they are by no means applicable; nor is there, in the fact before us, any thing to warrant such a conclusion. Whatever soothing expressions the joy, the attachment, or even the humanity of the addressers might dictate to them, on an occasion which naturally called forth strong feeling, and necessarily demanded great delicacy, there was nothing in the nature of their situation which could lead to abject submissions. Multitudes had conceived, whether erroneously or not is immaterial, that, during the indisposition of the king, their representatives had been struggling for the liberties of the country, and the safeguards of its constitution: and the persons who imagined this were, for the most part, the same who penned and who presented the addresses.

By

By the restoration of his Majesty to the government, their fears had all been quieted; the stream of politics had retired into its ancient channel: they had surrendered no rights; they had lost no privileges or immunities: a great part of their joy arose from the consideration, that they had regained a monarch, who had ever proved himself the guardian of their liberties; that they were, therefore, as free as ever they had known themselves, and secure of so continuing; a joy of this nature is incompatible with slavish feelings. To rejoice that we are free, and to do it in a slavish manner, is contradictory. Such inconsistency is not in human nature.

S E C T.



## §. 4.

*Consideration of the Address proposed in the Sermon.*

DIFFERENT as our opinions are upon this subject, I can review yours without censure. If the addresses appear to you to be mean and servile, I heartily applaud your reprobation of them; and when you shall have proved them so to be, will join sincerely in it. But I cannot by any means agree, however faulty they may have been, to receive, as preferable in any degree, the form which you have offered.

Will you forgive me, if I say that I disapprove entirely, not only of the address you have proposed, but of the manner in which it is introduced? Your words are these,  
 “ Had I been to address the king on a late  
 “ occasion, I should have been inclined to do  
 “ it in a style very different from that of most  
 “ of the addressers, and to use some such lan-  
 “ guage

“ gauge as the following.” Besides the impropriety already remarked, of inserting any such matter in a Sermon, I cannot but consider this introduction as a kind of unnecessary insult offered to the greater part of the addressers. When we censure the conduct of others, we only deliver an opinion, which, with modesty, is always allowable : but when we propose ourselves as models of better conduct, we assume a superiority by no means equally tolerable. Were I, who, in a friendly manner, endeavour to deliver to you my opinion of your late discourse, to say, in any part of my letter, “ had I been to preach before that society, I would have done it in the following manner”—I should think that I had broken the compact, and offered you an open insult. It would have been more modest to have submitted, to the consideration of your hearers, whether such a style of address might not have been preferable.

The whole address, as you have given it, might surely thus be interpreted. —“ The  
“ addressers in general are base and flattering  
“ slaves : I, one of the few remaining of the

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“ uncor-

“ uncorrupted breed of Englishmen, would  
 “ have expressed myself as follows.”— • “ I  
 “ rejoice, Sir, in your recovery. I thank God  
 “ for his goodness, not to me, in restoring  
 “ such a king, but to you as a common man,  
 “ in giving you the health you had lost. I  
 “ honour you as bearing the title of king, and  
 “ because you are a king on the terms of a wise  
 “ constitution, *but not at all on your account.*  
 “ May you enjoy all possible happiness. May  
 “ God prevent you from having your imagi-  
 “ nation seduced, like that of a child, by the  
 “ fine words now delivered to you, *of which, I*  
 “ *fear, there is great danger.* May you be led

• I subjoin the original address.

“ I rejoice, Sir, in your recovery. I thank God for  
 his goodness to you. I honour you, not only as my  
 King, but as almost the only lawful King in the world,  
 because the only one who owes his crown to the choice of  
 his people. May you enjoy all possible happiness. May  
 God shew you the folly of those effusions of adulation  
 which you are now receiving, and guard you against  
 their effects. May you be led to such a just sense of the  
 nature of your situation, and *imbued with* such wisdom,  
 as shall render your restoration to the government of these  
 kingdoms, a blessing to it, (*qu. them?*) and engage you  
 to consider yourself as more properly the servant than  
 the sovereign of your people.” P. 24.

“ to

“ to such a sense of the nature of your kingly  
 “ situation *as you never yet have had*, and en-  
 “ dowed with such wisdom *as you never yet*  
 “ *have discovered*: that your restoration to  
 “ the government may be, *what I do not*  
 “ *much expect it will, and what, without*  
 “ *these cautions and improvements it cannot be,*  
 “ a blessing to your kingdoms; and engage  
 “ you to consider, not me as your humble  
 “ servant, but yourself as mine.”

Such is the interpretation which your address not only admits, but, I fear, demands; the passages in *Italic* being, though not expressed, most fully implied in your own composition. If I think this, can you blame me for disapproving? If I am mistaken, it remains with you to correct an error, from which I cannot extricate myself. Now granting, for argument's sake, what I do not in fact allow, even in the smallest degree, that those insinuations, concerning the character of his Majesty, are just; that a mind superior to flattery, and a better sense of his situation and duty were wanting to him; yet surely the moment of recovery, from a dangerous and most afflictive disorder, was



not exactly the fit time for biting sarcasms, and insulting admonitions : and the addressers whom you censure, were more judicious, as well as more humane, in presenting balm and lenient applications to a mind which thus had suffered, than you would have appeared in administering your caustics and corrosives. For your credit's sake, I rejoice that you had no opportunity to take a step so totally unworthy of you.

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## §. 5.

*Fanaticism of Liberty.*

BUT I suspect that you have no kind of knowledge of him to whom you conceived these degrading insinuations necessary. There is, Sir, besides the genuine spirit of liberty, which dictated the laws of our constitution, a *fanaticism* respecting it; a disorder to which even minds of considerable strength, and souls of the utmost integrity have sometimes, been found



found liable. It has been often particularly prevalent in this country, where, possessing the reality of public liberty, we cannot easily refine beyond it, without proceeding to a dangerous excess. Of this fanaticism it is, I think, an infallible symptom, to judge ill of the governing power, without any, or at least, without any sufficient cause. To persons infected with this disease, a king is always a monster, whom, though it may be convenient to employ, it is always necessary to suspect, to counteract, and to insult: the inseparable qualities of the animal being supposed to be ambition, pride, selfish disregard of all others, and a disposition, as you express it, "to think mankind his own." — They whose faculties are not disturbed by such phantastic images, are persuaded that the creature may exist without these formidable qualities: they conceive that a king may be in inclination, as well as in duty, the *Father of his people*. I declare that this is my opinion, and without going far to seek it, I think I could point out an instance.

I am the more convinced that you have viewed your Sovereign only through the  
false

false medium of this unhappy prejudice, when I read the following most injurious insinuation. After stating, very justly, that the Majesty of the King is, virtually and originally, the delegated Majesty of the People, you proceed, and, as one of friendly dispositions towards you, I am sorry that you do proceed, in these words. “ For this reason, “ whatever he may be in his private capacity ; “ and though, *in respect of personal qualities,* “ *not equal to, and even far below many among* “ *ourselves,*—for this reason, I say, (that is, “ as representing the community and its first “ magistrate) he is entitled to our reverence “ and obedience. The words, most excellent Majesty, *are rightly applied to him,* “ and there is a respect which it would be “ criminal to withhold from him.” Now, Sir, if you can positively and unequivocally assure us, that in the above passage your design was only to speak generally, and to put a possible case, I beg pardon for having harboured an unjust suspicion, and am very far from objecting to the sentiment. But if you really intended to insinuate, (as indeed the mode of expression, the break in the sentence,

tence, and the parenthetical insertion of what you would give seemingly as the *only* reason for respecting his Majesty, do seem most strongly to denote) that the throne is filled at present by a man, who, in personal qualities, is not equal to, and even far below many among ourselves, I will not hesitate to answer, that I believe the assertion to be false, and to afford an indubitable proof of the fanaticism here described.

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## §. 6.

*A Word or two about the King.*

I DETEST, Sir, as much as you can, every species of adulation; and if I have not subscribed my name to this letter, it is not because I fear, or am ashamed, to avow the sentiments it contains, but because the subject is such, as in this place must lead me to declare an opinion, which malicious interpretation

tation might represent as published only from some mean and interested motive. Disavowing, therefore, all unworthy impulse, sheltering myself under the obscurity of an anonymous writer, and influenced by the desire of doing justice alone, I will here venture to assert, that I do not believe there was, within the walls of your church, a single man superior in personal qualities to him whom you apparently point out.

It is rather a hard condition attached to the Crown of Great-Britain, that every subject in the realm may traduce and vilify the King, not only with impunity, but generally with a certainty of applause; yet it is impossible to write in his behalf, without incurring the suspicion of being an hireling and a slave. Nevertheless, as I have advanced thus far, and at the hazard of all obloquy, should my name hereafter become known, I will declare freely what I think: that in those personal qualities which a good man estimates most highly, morality, religious feeling, and untainted integrity of heart, the sovereign of these kingdoms has



*no superior*; and as for mental qualities, so much more generally, and by too many exclusively admired at present, I doubt not, that if you could be indulged with an audience of the man of whom you think thus lightly, you would return, as one at least as wise\*, did formerly, astonished at the variety and accuracy of information he possesses.

I am not writing a panegyric, and therefore will neither dwell upon this topic, nor detail the anecdotes and circumstances by which I have been led to form this opinion. It is granted that there are occasions in which a man may be allowed, without imputation, to commend even himself, which is the most necessarily interested of all commendations; I cannot, therefore, give up my notion, that there are also moments in which an Englishman, without fear of being deemed a slave, may honourably praise HIS KING. This only I will add, that my enquiries have proved invariably, what is no mean test of merit in any man, that they who know our sovereign

\* DR. JOHNSON.

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best,

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best, are they who value and who love him most.

To such a man, arrived at full maturity and steadiness of character, the admonitions, my good Sir, contained in your address, however well intended, could not but be totally superfluous. If he never yet has been corrupted by adulation, there can be no reason to apprehend that now he will: if he never yet has wanted a just and even a tender regard for the welfare of his people, and a right sense of his duty towards them, there cannot now be any occasion to desire that he would learn those virtues, or to wish that he may obtain them from heaven.

SECT,

## §. 7.

*A few Thoughts upon Revolutions.*

I HAVE already, Sir, declared, that I suspect you to be infected, unknowingly, with the *fanaticism of liberty*: and I said it not to reproach you, but to put you upon examining for yourself into the truth of the allegation. I will subjoin a few other reasons to assist your examination.

You glory in the Revolution of 1689;—every Englishman glories in it; and no one more than he who has the honour to offer to you this expostulation: and when you assert that the King is accountable for his conduct to his people, which some have considered as contradictory to a great constitutional maxim, I conceive you only to mean what I equally think and assert, that in case of so notorious a violation of the compact

between king and people, as then had taken place, recurrence is still reserved to the principles and practices of that revolution. In a word, that exclusion from the throne will ever, while our constitution retains its vigour, be the regular and legal consequence of an evident design to subvert the rights, liberties, or established religion of the country. So far, if this be truly your meaning, we agree most cordially and entirely. But in the following points you betray, to my apprehension, a fanatic and misguided zeal. You glory in the American Revolution, and in that at present incomplete in France.

These two events, in their nature perfectly distinct, must receive a separate examination.

The *Americans*, by the assistance and protection of this country, of which they were virtually a part, had arrived at great prosperity and wealth. They enjoyed those advantages in a degree, which, considering the æra of their first establishment, was, perhaps, beyond example. Grievances they had none,  
except

except that they were physically, and originally by their own voluntary act, removed from the source of legislation; and that now and then their governors had been bad, or, at least, less good than might be wished. By degrees they were filled with alarms, propagated from this country, of a design, formed by the ministry, to rob them of their liberties: and, therefore, with the caution of a man who gives up his best friend, because he thinks he has discovered something untoward in his look, the moment a step of suspicious tendency was taken on our side, they threw off all allegiance. I avoid the detail of particulars. Faults there doubtless were on both sides, as in every human contest: the result was, as we all know, that North America became independent.

In the progress of this struggle, deluges of blood, and almost every complication of political evil in the one country, and in the other, certainly afford no theme for philosophical or christian exultation: at the close of the war, what was the result? A country was made free, which never for a moment

ment had been otherwise ; and the people of it were secured from oppression, the danger or probability of which they never had incurred. They were indeed *independent*: the word is noble and high sounding ; but it will neither recal the dead, nor feed the living : and perhaps it was the independence rather of a child turned loose into the world, than of one provided for and established. For these inestimable benefits the price America paid was strength, riches, and credit ; the loss of which left, necessarily, weakness, poverty, and public bankruptcy. While the mother country, though not so compleatly exhausted as she had every reason to expect, received, in return, for much parental kindness, and many exertions far from cheap or easy, a heavy weight of debt, and an apparent, if not a real diminution, of dignity and political consequence.

Instead of exulting in a Revolution productive of such effects, I consider it as the chastisement of heaven, inflicted duly on both countries, for many and heinous offences. I contemplate these events as directed



rected by the hand of Providence; among other reasons, possibly, to repress the pride of Britain, and to carry back the Americans to that poverty, which ever is to nations the school of wisdom and morality; lest, without this salutary check, they should have stood single, in the annals of the world, as a nation which, suddenly enriched by commerce and protection, never had known an age of public virtue.

These things I know you have regarded in a very different light; you have considered America as oppressed, its rebellion as a glorious struggle for liberty, and a part of the great plan of Providence to extend good government throughout the world. But the flourishing situation of that country was no indication of oppression, which if it had suffered, its people would not so soon have been in a condition to rebel. Nor do the colonies still remaining to us exhibit any proof that subjection to Great Britain is a situation to which a man had better perish than submit. They flourish and are happy: even more than the *independent* Americans.

For these reasons, with submission to the ordinances of Providence, I still regret that very revolution in which you glory and exult.

With respect to the Revolution in France, as its termination is yet to come, we cannot speak decisively. So far, however, as with little bloodshed the people appear to have subverted radically the whole system of despotic government, it is an event at which every disinterested Englishman will heartily exult. But in as much as it seems to have substituted in the place of a bad government, the only thing which is considerably worse, a total anarchy; and as the country appears thereby to be in danger of incurring evils too dreadful to contemplate, I cannot but regard it with a large admixture of horror. More temper, and more experience of the true nature of political liberty, might have rendered it a revolution in all respects glorious; but as it is, I cannot but think that Providence must interpose rather more directly than usual, if the nation is to be preserved from confusion. To the liberty of  
France

France I am, I will venture to say, no less a well-wisher than yourself: with her anarchy I am not pleased; nor can I, even when I recollect her very recent injustice to us, exult or triumph to behold her revenues failing, her commerce stagnating, her credit perishing, and the principal evils which made some innovation necessary, increasing a thousand fold under the injudicious, or dishonest efforts of her temporary leaders.

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§ 8.

*Reform of Parliament.*

ON the other topics of your discourse I have very little to offer. The reform in the representation of our own country, which you urge on principles speculatively right, would be of all things most desirable,

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were

were we not already happy, and completely free without it. It might also be very highly desirable, could it be preceded by a reformation in the morals of our countrymen. But while they continue to be actuated chiefly by motives of self-interest, I fear it will be impossible to govern them by any nobler means. A parliament attached to the government by no tie but the whim or fancied interest of each separate moment, would, in the present condition of men's minds, destroy the efficacy of every ministry that could be formed. At the same time I shall always wish for as much purity of representation as the temper of the age will bear.



## § 9.

*Test Act.*

YOU have chosen to introduce the Test Act also as connected with your subject; of this, as you might deem me prejudiced, I shall say but very little, leaving it to the wisdom of the legislature to decide according to their own feelings, and the principles of the constitution. The question appears simply to be this; *whether governments possess or not a natural right to secure their own continuance on the principles of their original establishment, by excluding from active situations of trust all persons whose avowed opinions are inconsistent with the maxims they have adopted.* That they have a right of this kind your brethren appear very strongly, though tacitly, to acknowledge, by their total acquiescence in tests opposed to Roman Catholics. But principles have a different aspect as they operate against others or ourselves. The progress of your friends in their efforts,



at which you triumph, excites in me no astonishment. Your sect, sir, has, at present, the zeal and restless activity natural to all men who have in view an important worldly object: we have had, perhaps, too much of the indolence and security of possession. Should your opposition rouse us into any thing, I hope it will be only, if it be wanting to us, a more active zeal, and more perfect Christianity.

To drop all points that may lead at all to disputation; let me close this subject with a sincere and fervent wish, in which I doubt not you will join most cordially. "May such political arrangements at all times be adopted in this kingdom, as may tend the most effectually to the propagation of true religion, and the general reformation of morals: and in the present particular case, may those ordinances be finally established, which will operate most powerfully to those great ends, whatever may be their effect upon our worldly situation."

*Conclusion.*

THUS have I, sir, according to my promise, discussed the matters on which our opinions chiefly differ, in such a manner as cannot, I think, in the least offend your feelings. My objects were truth, justice, and the hope of counteracting what appeared to me of dangerous tendency in a sermon very widely circulated. Where I could with honesty assent to your doctrines, I have done it; and to conclude by an act of that kind, I will here transcribe, with the most sincere applause, a part of your discourse, which not a little strengthened the good opinion I had before conceived of you, from other passages in your theological works. Some circumstances considered, there is in it I think an imprudence, which proves your zeal for religion to be, as it ought, honest, fervent, and superior, in some points, to the impulses of temporal interest; the words are these,

these, to which, if by repeating them I should give additional effect, my ambition would be fully gratified.

“ But, brethren, while we thus shew our  
 “ patriotic zeal, let us take care not to dis-  
 “ grace the cause of patriotism, by any licen-  
 “ tious or immoral conduct. Oh ! how ear-  
 “ nestly do I wish that all who profess zeal in  
 “ this cause, were as distinguished by the pu-  
 “ rity of their morals as some of them are by  
 “ their abilities ; and that I could make them  
 “ sensible of the advantages they would de-  
 “ rive from a virtuous character, and of the  
 “ suspicions they incur by wanting it. Oh !  
 “ that I could see in men who oppose tyranny  
 “ in the state, a disdain of the tyranny of low  
 “ passions in themselves ; or, at least, such a  
 “ sense of shame, and regard to public order  
 “ and decency as would induce them to  
 “ hide their irregularities, and to avoid insult-  
 “ ing the virtuous part of the community by  
 “ an open exhibition of vice ! I cannot re-  
 “ concile myself to the idea of an immoral  
 “ patriot, or to that separation of private from  
 “ public virtue, which some think to be pos-  
 “ sible.

“fible. Is it to be expected that—but I  
 “must forbear. I am afraid of applications,  
 “which many are too ready to make, and for  
 “which I should be sorry to give any just  
 “occasion !”

These, fir, are the words of truth and  
 soberness, they are words which, though on  
 earth they may procure some enemies, cannot  
 fail to plead in your behalf with the only  
 invaluable Friend of all men.

Not less than you, do I abhor malicious  
 interpretations, and therefore shall be far  
 from making any such applications as you  
 appear to dread. But if there were, by chance,  
 among your auditors any whom the de-  
 scription there given exactly fitted, I think,  
 unless they were as dead to feeling as to duty,  
 your expressions must have stung them to the  
 heart.

But let the stricken deer go weep,  
 The hart ungall'd go play ;

To their own reflections, and to the se-  
 cret reproof of conscience, which sooner or  
 later



later must be felt, I leave all such; disdaining no less to pollute an honest and impartial page with personal invective, than with personal adulation.

I am, SIR,

With the sincerity of a brother-christian,

Your friend

And humble servant.

FINIS.



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8. Map of Lord Howe Island.
9. View of ditto.
10. View of Natives and a Hut in New South Wales.
11. View of New South Wales.
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